

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BERLIN 05806 01 OF 03 061903Z

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ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05 CIAE-00

SP-02 IO-03 EB-03 NEA-06 DODE-00 PM-03 L-01 ACDA-10

PRS-01 SAJ-01 /063 W

----- 080862

R 061623Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 901

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION USBERLIN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 BERLIN 5806

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PFOR, US, UR, GE, GW

SUBJECT: COURTESY CALL ON SOVIET AMBASSADOR ABRASIMOV

### SUMMARY

DURING MY CALL ON SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO THE GDR ABRASIMOV ON JUNE 5, THE FOLLOWING TOPICS WERE DISCUSSED: HIS IMPRESSIONS OF THE GDR: DETENTE; THE MIDDLE EAST; CSCE: SECRETARY KISSINGER'S VISIT TO WEST BERLIN; US/GDR RELATIONS: AND THE VISIT OF DAVID ROCKEFELLER. END SUMMARY.

1. I PAID MY RETURN CALL ON SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO THE GDR ABRASIMOV ON JUNE 5, ACCOMPANIED BY DCM GROVE. ALSO PRESENT WERE MINISTER-COUNSELOR HOTULEW AND AN INTERPRETER. OUR CONVERSATION LASTED ONE HOUR, AND THE SUBJECTS DISCUSSED ARE REPORTED BELOW IN THE SEQUENCE IN WHICH THEY AROSE. THE ATMOSPHERE WAS RELAXED, CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 BERLIN 05806 01 OF 03 061903Z

ALTHOUGH THE FRANKNESS OF DISCUSSION BROUGHT OUT

DIFFERENCES OF VIEW ON BOTH SIDES.

2. HIS IMPRESSION OF THE GDR

AFTER PRELIMINARY GREETINGS, I ASKED ABRASIMOV, WHO HAD PREVIOUSLY SERVED FOR NINE YEARS AS AMBASSADOR IN EAST BERLIN, WHAT HIS IMPRESSIONS OF THE GDR AND ITS FUTURE WERE. ABRASIMOV REPLIED THAT SINCE HIS DEPARTURE IN 1971 THE GDR HAD BECOME A MEMBER OF THE UN; IT HAD BEEN RECOGNIZED BY MOST COUNTRIES, AND THERE WAS NOW AN AMERICAN AMBASSADOR IN BERLIN. ITS SITUATION IN THE WORLD, THEREFORE, HAD UNDERGONE MARKED CHANGE. ABRASIMOV DWELT UPON ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL FACTORS, NOTING THE STABILITY OF PRICES, THE ABSENCE OF UNEMPLOYMENT AND THE SHORTAGE OF LABOR. CITING STATISTICS, HE POINTED OUT THAT PRODUCTIVITY IS EXPECTED TO INCREASE BY 30 PERCENT UNDER THE NEXT FIVE-YEAR PLAN, NATIONAL INCOME BY 5-6 PERCENT, AND IN KEY ECONOMIC AREAS SUCH AS HOUSING THE CONSTRUCTION OF 750,000 NEW APARTMENTS IS PLANNED. THE SED CENTRAL COMMITTEE WAS MEETING THIS VERY DAY, ABRASIMOV SAID, TO ADDRESS ECONOMIC QUESTIONS AND PLANS FOR THE PARTY CONGRESS TO BE HELD IN MAY OF NEXT YEAR. ABRASIMOV DESCRIBED THE GDR AS DEVELOPING "NORMALLY AND ACTIVELY."

3. I ASKED HOW SUCH A LARGE INCREASE IN PRODUCTIVITY COULD OCCUR UNDER FULL EMPLOYMENT AND THE HIGH PRESENT PRODUCTIVITY HE HAD NOTED. ABRASIMOV CITED PROGRESS IN AUTOMATION, NEW MACHINERY AND BETTER COOPERATION AMONG VARIOUS FACTORIES AND PRODUCTION CENTERS. HE SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THERE WAS FULL EMPLOYMENT, SOME 350,000 GDR CITIZENS WOULD REACH WORKING AGE IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS. THERE WILL BE NO OUTSIDE LABOR FORCE, HE ADDED.

4. DETENTE

I UNDERLINED THE IMPORTANCE TO THE US OF THE MAINTENANCE OF DETENTE, NOTING THAT FOREIGN MINISTER GROMYKO IN HIS SPEECH OF MAY 14 HAD STRESSED THIS THEME. I ADDED THAT I HAD HEARD AN ACCOUNT ON THE MORNING NEWS OF GROMYKO'S STATEMENT IN CONNECTION WITH THE VISIT TO MOSCOW OF GDR  
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PAGE 03 BERLIN 05806 01 OF 03 061903Z

FOREIGN MINISTER FISCHER IN WHICH GROMYKO REPORTEDLY CAUTIONED AGAINST THE EXPLOITATION BY OUTSIDE FORCES OF ELEMENTS OF DIVERSITY IN SOCIALIST STATES. ABRASIMOV DID NOT RESPOND TO GROMYKO'S REMARKS DIRECTLY, BUT SAID THE SOVIET UNION RECOGNIZED THAT EACH SOCIALIST STATE HAD ITS OWN CULTURE, ECONOMY AND SET OF RELATIONSHIPS, AND THERE WAS THUS A PROPER KIND OF DIVERSITY WITHIN THE SOCIALIST WORLD. THE POLICY OF DETENTE REMAINS

THE "GENERAL LINE" OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT; "WE WERE-AND STILL ARE--FOR DETENTE," HE SAID. ABRASIMOV REPEATED THE FAMILIAR THEME THAT DETENTE IS NOT ONLY IN THE US AND SOVIET INTEREST, BUT IN THE INTEREST OF THE ENTIRE WORLD. HE HAD SEEN OUR ADHERENCE TO DETENTE IN THE RECENT SPEECHES OF PRESIDENT FORD AND SECRETARY KISSINGER. I INTERVENED TO REMARK THAT ALTHOUGH THERE WERE SOME ELEMENTS WITHIN THE US CRITICAL OF CERTAIN ASPECTS OF DETENTE, I HAD NO DOUBT THAT THE OVERWHELMING POPULAR SENTIMENT AND THAT OF THE CONGRESS SUPPORTED THIS POLICY.

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PAGE 01 BERLIN 05806 02 OF 03 061937Z

66

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 3 BERLIN 5806

LIMDIS

5. ABRASIMOV STRESSED THAT THE USSR FAVORS THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH THE US. THE EFFORTS OF PRESIDENT FORD AND HIS ADMINISTRATION (WITH REGARD TO THE TRADE ACT) HAD NOT RECEIVED CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT. HE HOPED THIS SITUATION WOULD BE TEMPORARY. POLITICAL CONSULTATIONS AT THE SUMMIT AND FOREIGN MINISTER LEVELS ARE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE, HE SAID, REPEATING THE THEME

THAT GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN THE US AND SOVIET UNION  
HAVE IMPORTANT CONSEQUENCES FOR THE REST OF THE WORLD.

6 THE MIDDLE EAST

OUR TWO COUNTRIES, ABRASIMOV SAID, ARE "NOT MERELY  
SUPER-POWERS," BUT "THE TWO MOST POWERFUL STATES IN THE  
WORLD." HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE FORD ADMINISTRATION  
WANTED A PEACEFUL WORLD, NOTING THAT IN THE 30 YEARS  
SINCE THE END OF WORLD WAR II THERE HAD BEEN NO WAR TO  
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PAGE 02 BERLIN 05806 02 OF 03 061937Z

CAUSE A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE US AND SOVIET UNION.  
THIS IS "AN HONOR TO OUR JOINT EFFORTS," AND TO THE  
"CORRECT POLICIES" PRESIDENT FORD AND THE US GOVERN-  
MENT ARE FOLLOWING. ABRASIMOV POINTED OUT THAT THERE  
ARE "AGGRESSIVE POINTS", AS IN THE MIDDLE EAST, WHICH ARE  
IN NEED OF RESOLUTION. HE SAID THAT PRESIDENT FORD  
HAD STATED THAT THE USG WOULD HAVE A NEW MIDDLE EAST  
PROPOSAL IN ONE MONTH. THE SOVIET UNION'S VIEW IS THAT  
THERE NEEDS TO BE "A COLLECTIVE SOLUTION" A GENEVA.  
WITH GOOD WILL ON ALL SIDES, THE FORTHCOMING GENEVA  
CONFERENCE COULD BE A TURNING POINT. THE SOVIET UNION IS  
IN FAVOR OF THE SOVEREIGN EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL, AND OF  
SECURITY FOR ISRAEL WITHIN ITS BOUNDARIES. THE SOVIET  
UNION, HOWEVER, OPPOSES ISRAEL'S AGGRESSION AGAINST THE  
ARAB COUNTRIES. I SAID I APPRECIATED HEARING HIS VIEWS  
IN SUCH DETAIL AND WITH SUCH EVIDENT FRANKNESS.

7 CSCE

ABRASIMOV THEN TURNED TO CSCE, IN WHAT HAD BECOME A  
TOUR D' HORIZON. WITH GOOD WILL, HE SAID, CSCE WILL BE  
ABLE TO CONVENE IN THE SUMMER AS AGREED EARLIER BY THE  
SOVIET UNION AND THE US. THIS WILL SERVE TO PROTECT  
PEACE IN EUROPE OUR TWO COUNTRIES, HE HOPED, WERE  
EQUALLY INTERESTED THAT THERE BE NO FURTHER WARS. A  
NEW WAR WOULD BE DIFFERENT FROM ANYTHING HIS AND MY  
GENERATION HAD EXPERIENCED. ABRASIMOV SAID THE SOVIET  
PEOPLE HAD HIGH HOPES FOR THE OUTCOME OF A MEETING  
BETWEEN BREZHNEV AND FORD, STRESSING THE GREAT IMPOR-  
TANCE OF THIS MEETING. " WE BOTH HAVE MANY INTERNAL  
PROBLEMS, AND IN THIS CONNECTION WE BOTH NEED PEACE,"  
HE OBSERVED.

8 I REPLIED THAT MY GOVERNMENT FULLY SHARED THE DESIRE  
FOR PEACE, EMPHASIZING THAT WHILE OUR RELATIONS DID  
HAVE CONSEQUENCES FOR COUNTRIES OTHER THAN THE US  
AND THE SOVIET UNION, THEY WERE, NEVERTHELESS, IMPOR-  
TANT WITHIN THEMSELVES. I SAID THAT WHILE I HAD NOT BEEN

A NEGOTIATOR, I HAD BEEN AN OBSERVER AT THE SALT TALKS  
ON BEHALF OF THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE.  
I HAD LEARNED ABOUT NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND THE ALL BUT  
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 BERLIN 05806 02 OF 03 061937Z

INCOMPREHENSIBLE CONSEQUENCES THAT WOULD BEFALL THE WORLD  
SHOULD THEY BE USED.

9. ABRASIMOV REMAINED THAT BOTH THE US AND SOVIET UNION HAD  
HUGE STORES OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS. HE SAID THE US HAD  
GREAT PLANS FOR PEACEFUL USES OF ATOMIC ENERGY. WE SHOULD  
USE THE ATOM TO SERVE--NOT KILL--PEOPLE, HE SAID. I  
RESPONDED THAT PEACEFUL USE OF NUCLEAR ENERGY WOULD OF  
COURSE BRING WITH IT A CONCERN FOR PROPER SAFEGUARDS, AND  
THAT WITHOUT SUCH SAFEGUARDS SERIOUS PROBLEMS WOULD  
REMAIN. I WAS ASSURED THAT HIS COUNTRY WOULD OBSERVE PROPER  
SAFEGUARDS IN PROVIDING NUCLEAR PLANSTS TO OTHER COUNTRIES.

10 SECRETARY KISSINGER'S VISIT TO WEST BERLIN

ABRASIMOV TURNED THE CONVERSATION TO THE SECREARY'S  
RECENT VISIT TO WEST BELIN. (I HAD DECIDED EARLIER THAT  
IF HE WERE TO COMMENT ON WEST BERLIN MATTERS, I WOULD  
HEAD HIM OUT IN ORDER TO LEARN WHAT WAS ON HIS MIND  
BEFORE REMINDING HIM THAT SUCH MATTERS WERE PROPERTLY  
DISCUSSED WITH ALLIED AMBASSADORS RESIDENT IN BONN.)  
ABRASIMOV SAID THAT HE WAS "PLEASED" WITH SECRETARY  
KISSINGER'S SPEECH IN WEST BERLIN. THERE WERE CERTAIN  
POINTS CONCERNING THE QUADRIPARTITE AGREEMENT AND ITS  
APPLICATION TO WEST BERLIN " THAT I AM READY TO SIGN  
MYSELF," HE SAID. (I BELIEVE THIS WAS A REFERENCE TO  
A SENTENCE IN THE SECREARY' REMARKS WHICH HAS BEEN  
WIDELY NOTE: "THE WESTERN ALLIES' RIGHTS AND RESPON-  
SIBILITIES TO SAFEGUARD THE STATUS OF THE WESTERN SECTOR  
OF BERLIN HAVE BEEN SPECIFICALLY REAFFIRMED.") WITHOUT  
THE QUADRIPARTITE AGREEMENT, ABRASIMOV SAID, TENSION  
WITHIN THE CITY WOULD CONTINUE AND NO ONE COULD SAY HOW  
THIS WOULD END. ALL SIDES SHOULD FOLLOW THE AGREEMENT.  
THE SECREARY'S REMARKS ON OBSERVANCE OF THE QUADRIPARTITE  
AGREEMENT, HE SPECULATED, WERE PROBABLY NOT TO THE LIKING  
OF SOME AUTHORITIES IN BERLIN AND BONN. WHAT WAS  
IMPORTANT IS THAT "WE SHOULD HAVE OUR OWN POLICY" AND  
FOLLOW STRICTLY WHAT WAS SIGNED THREE YEARS AGO.

11. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER, HOWEVER, IF KISSINGER  
HAD MANAGED TO COME FROM VIENNA TO WEST BERLIN THEREBY  
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PAGE 04 BERLIN 05806 02 OF 03 061937Z

AVOIDING THE "INTRUSION" OF GENSCHER. THE SOVIETS REALIZE THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER DID NOT INVITE GENSCHER TO ACCOMPANY HIM. THIS WAS PROBABLY GENSCHER'S INITIATIVE. SOVIET PROTESTS AND STATEMENTS, THEREFORE, HAVE NOT BEEN DIRECTED AGAINST THE US.

12. ABRASIMOV MENTIONED A NEWS ARTICLE ABOUT HIMSELF, THAT HAD APPEARED THE PREVIOUS DAY IN "DIE WELT". (THIS STORY, WHILE NOT PARTICULARLY UNFRIENDLY, HAD SUGGESTED THAT ABRASIMOV HAD FALLEN OUT OF FAVOR IN PARTY CIRCLES IN MOSCOW AND HAD BEEN SENT BACK TO EAST BERLIN IN EXILE.) ABRASIMOV SAID THAT KIND OF STORY WAS PART OF A WELL-KNOWN CAMPAIGN IN THE WEST, BUT THAT "WHILE THE DOG MAY BE BARKING, THE CARAVAN MOVES ON." HE CONCLUDED BY DESCRIBING GENSCHER'S ACCOMPANYING THE SECRETARY TO WEST BERLIN AS, IN SOVIET EYES, "A STRICT VIOLATION OF THE QUADRIPARTITE AGREEMENT WHICH PROHIBITS THE OFFICIAL PRESENCE OF FRG REPRESENTATIVES IN WEST BERLIN FOR THE PURPOSE OF PERFORMING THEIR OFFICIAL DUTIES." (COMMENT: IN THE TONE OF THESE STATEMENTS THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE OF HOSTILITY OR THREAT AGAINST WEST BERLIN OR THE FRG.)

#### 13 US/GDR RELATIONS

IF IT IS NOT A SECRET, ABRASIMOV ASKED, WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF US/GDR RELATIONS; I SAID OUR TIES WERE AS GOOD AS COULD BE EXPECTED, CONSIDERING THE SHORT PERIOD SINCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS AND NOTED THAT GDR AUTHORITIES HAD BEEN HELPFUL TO US IN SETTLING IN. I RECOUNTED BRIEFLY THE STATUS OF SUCH BILATERAL MATTERS AS THE POSTAL AGREEMENT; THE AGREEMENT CONCERNING FISHERIES; THE QUESTION OF LABELING; AND, IN THE CONTEXT OF NEGOTIATING A CONSULAR CONVENTION OUR VIEWS CONCERNING ANY NEED TO DEFINE CITIZENSHIP OR NATIONALITY.

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PAGE 01 BERLIN 05806 03 OF 03 061949Z

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SP-02 IO-03 EB-03 NEA-06 DODE-00 PM-03 L-01 ACDA-10

PRS-01 SAJ-01 /063 W

----- 081596

R 061623Z JUN 75

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 3 OF 3 BERLIN 5806

LIMDIS

14. ABRASIMOV WAS WELL INFORMED ON THIS LAST POINT HE NOTED THAT SOME WESTERN COUNTRIES HAD ALREADY ACCEPTED THE GDR FORMULATION CONCERNING NATIONALITY IN THEIR CONSULAR CONVENTIONS, ADDING THAT THE US SHOULD NOT BE THE LAST COUNTRY TO SIGN SUCH AN AGREEMENT WITH THE GDR. THE EXISTENCE AND RIGHTS OF GDR CITIZENS SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED, HE STATED, AS MUST BE THE RIGHT OF THE GDR TO PROTECT ITS CITIZENS BEYOND ITS BOUNDARIES. I COMMENTED THAT THIS WOULD BE DISCUSSED IN THE COMING NEGOTIATIONS ADDING THAT THE PRINCIPLES OF THE VIENNA CONVENTION AND OUR PRECEDENTS GUIDED OUR CONSULAR RELATIONS AND SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD BY THE GDR.

15. VISIT OF DAVID ROCKEFELLER

ABRASIMOV RAISED THE VISIT OF CHASE MANHATTAN BANK CHAIRMAN DAVID ROCKEFELLER TO THE GDR THAT BEGAN THAT CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BERLIN 05806 03 OF 03 061949Z

AFTERNOON I RESPONDED THAT MR. ROCKEFELLER WAS THE GUEST OF THE GDR, AND BRIEFLY DESCRIBED THE PROGRAM THAT HAD BEEN PREPARED FOR HIM. ABRASIMOV NOTED THAT MR. ROCKEFELLER, DURING THE COURSE OF HIS MOSCOW VISIT, HAD "ADVANCED UNACCEPTABLE PROPOSITIONS TO THE USSR CONCERNING CREDIT RATES." I MADE NO COMMENT.

16 THE WEATHER

INEVITABLY, AT THE END OF AN HOUR OF CONVERSATION THE SUBJECT OF THE WEATHER CAME UP.(IT HAS BEEN UNSEASONABLY COLD IN BERLIN FOR THE PAST FEW DAYS.) WITHOUT

CHANGING HIS CONVERSATIONAL STYLE, ABRASIMOV SAID THAT US AND SOVIET COSMONAUTS MUST HAVE LEFT A WINDOW OPEN SOMEWHAT OUT THERE. I REPLIED THAT FARMERS IN KENTUCKY HAVE IN RECENT YEARS ATTRIBUTED UNEXPECTED WEATHER TO THE FACT THAT MAN HAS WALKED ON THE MOON.

17 COMMENT:

I WAS STRUCK BY THE CONTRAST BETWEEN ABRASIMOV AND HIS PREDECESSOR YEFREMOV. ASKED ABOUT SOVIET/GDR RELATIONS, ABRASIMOV CITED STATISTICS AND REFERRED TO SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF GDR PLANNING. CONCERNING DETENTE ABRASIMOV TALKED WITH KNOWLEDGE ABOUT SUCH DISTANT AREAS AS THE MIDDLE EAST, AND QUICKLY GOT BYOND THE PLATITUDES THAT HAD SERVED YEFREMOV. ON WEST BERLIN, A SUBJECT THAT I DID NOT INVITE HIM OT DISCUSS AND ONE UPON WHICH I DID NOT COMMENT, ABRASIMOV SPOKE THE PIECE HE HAD OBVIOUSLY PREPARED FOR OUR MEETING. IN ASKING ME HOW WE WERE SETTLING IN, ABRASIMOV WAS INTERESTED IN THE SUBSTANCE OF OUR DEVELOPING RELATIONS WITH THE GDR RATHER THAN IN THE MODALITIES OF OBTAINING HOUSING AND OFFICE SPACE THAT HAD AROUSED YEFREMOV'S CURIOSITY.

18. ABRASIMOV IS WELL BRIEFED, OBVIOUSLY INTERESTED IN THE SUBJECTS HE DISCUSSED, PRECISE IN HIS FORMULATIONS, CONFIDENT OF HIS AUTHORITY TO SPEAK IN DETAIL ON WIDE-RANGING ISSUES, AND NOT WITHOUT WARMTH AND HUMOR. HE LACKS THE SPONTANEITY, OPENNESS AND GLAD-HANDEDNESS OF HIS PREDECESSOR. HE SAW TO IT THAT BRANDY  
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PAGE 03 BERLIN 05806 03 OF 03 061949Z

WAS POURED AT OUR TABLE LADEN WITH FRUIT AND CAKE, BUT HE NO MORE FELT THE NEED TO DRINK OR PROPOSE A TOAST THAN I DID. COOPER

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** Z  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 06 JUN 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** GolinoFR  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1975BERLIN05806  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D750198-1112  
**From:** BERLIN  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1975/newtext/t19750671/aaaacmtd.tel  
**Line Count:** 423  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION EUR  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** LIMDIS  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 8  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** LIMDIS  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** GolinoFR  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 07 APR 2003  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <07 APR 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <09 APR 2003 by GolinoFR>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
06 JUL 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** COURTESY CALL ON SOVIET AMBASSADOR ABRASIMOV SUMMARY  
**TAGS:** PFOR, US, UR, GC, GE, XX, (ABRASIMOV)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006